

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

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ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 SS-15 NSC-10 RSR-01 RSC-01 /046 W

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R 271032Z AUG 73

FM AMEMBASSY LAGOS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 789

C O N F I D E N T I A L LAGOS 6961

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, NI

SUBJECT: PRESIDENT NIXON'S LETTER TO GENERAL GOWON

REF: LAGOS 6870

1. OVER WEEKEND I URGED PRINCIPAL SECRETARY HAMZAT AHMADU TO EXPEDITE REPLY TO LETTER, EMPHASIZING NEED FOR OFFICIAL WRITTEN REACTION FROM GOWON IN ORDER TO ARRIVE AT MUTUALLY CONVIENT TIME. AHMADU APOLOGIZED FOR "OUR COMPLICATED PROCEDURES," SAYING THAT LETTER NOW BEING DRAFTED BY IYALLA TO BE FORWARDED TO STATE HOUSE, WHERE "WE ARE CERTAIN TO CORRECT JOE'S WORK" BEFORE PASSING TO MEA FOR FINAL CONCURRENCE. I TOLD AHMADU THAT ALL BUREAUCRACIES ARE CUMBERSOME BUT THAT THE PROCEDURE HE OUTLINED COULD DELAY AN ANSWER UNTIL CHRISTMAS. HE THOUGHT NOT AND REVERTED TO ARIKPO'S POINT: WE ALREADY HAVE THE ANSWER. HE THEN REPEATED THE SAME DATES THAT THE COMMISSIONER HAD GIVEN ME, ADDING HOWEVER THAT THE PARTY COULD STAY THROUGH SUNDAY, OCTOBER 7. SINCE HE WAS INTRODUCING A SLIGHTLY DIFFERENT TIME FRAME FROM ARIKPO'S, I POINTED OUT THAT WITHOUT A WRITTEN REPLY WE WOULD CONTINUALLY GET ADDITIONS AND SUBTRACTIONS AS LONG AS WE DEPEND ON ORAL STATEMENTS. AHMADU GOT THE POINT AND SAID THAT HE WOULD WORK HARD TO HASTEN THE ANSWER AS SOON AS NIMEIRY STATE VISIT ENDS, DEJECTEDLY ADDING "YOU KNOW MY PROBLEMS AT MEA."

2. COMMENT: CONVERSATION CONFIRMS THAT REPLY IS ON THE NORMAL NIGERIAN TRACK WHICH ULTIMATELY REPEAT ULTIMATELY HAS A DESTINATION. NOW CLEARER THAN EVER THAT WEEKEND
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BEGINNING AFTERNOON OCTOBER 5 IS THE PERIOD FOR WHICH

WE CAN BEGIN PRELIMINARY HLANNING, SIMPLY ANNOUNCING OUR
DECISIONS TO FMG UPON RECEIPT OF REPLY.
REINHARDT

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